

HEPATITIS C, ACUTE

Hepatitis C is a liver disease caused by the hepatitis C virus (HCV), which is found in the blood of persons who have this disease. HCV is spread by contact with the blood of an infected person. Hepatitis C often produces an illness with insidious onset of symptoms, including anorexia, abdominal discomfort, nausea, vomiting, and progressing to jaundice less frequently than hepatitis B. Ninety percent of cases are asymptomatic, but chronic infection is common (50 to 80% of cases). Of these about half will develop cancer or cirrhosis of the liver. Groups at high risk of acquiring HCV are injecting drug users, recipients of blood products prior to 1992, and hemodialysis patients.

Laboratory Criteria for Confirmation:

- Serum aminotransferase levels $> 2\frac{1}{2}$ times the upper limit of normal; **and**
- IgM anti-HAV negative, **and**
- IgM anti-HBc negative (if done) or HBsAg negative, **and**
- Anti-HCV positive, with confirmation by a supplemental test (e.g., PCR or RIBA).

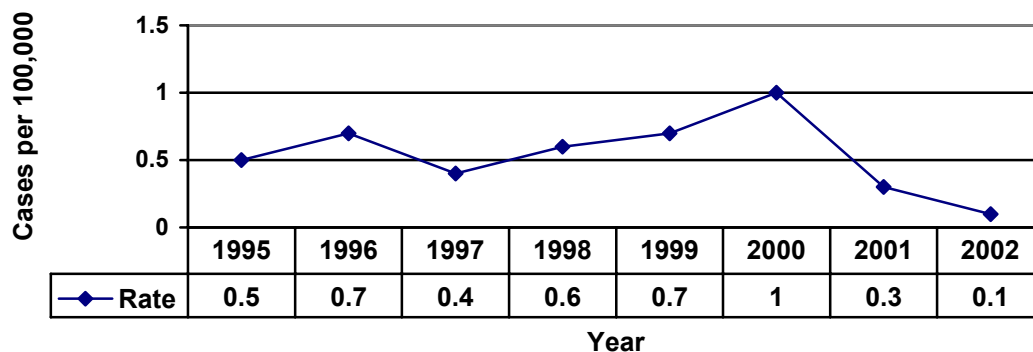
Case Classification

Confirmed: A case that meets the clinical case definition and is laboratory confirmed.

Comment

1. Persons who have chronic hepatitis or persons identified as HbsAg positive or anti-HCV positive should not be reported as having acute viral hepatitis unless they have evidence of an acute illness compatible with viral hepatitis (with the exception of perinatal hepatitis B infection).

**Acute Hepatitis C Incidence, Kentucky
1995-2002**



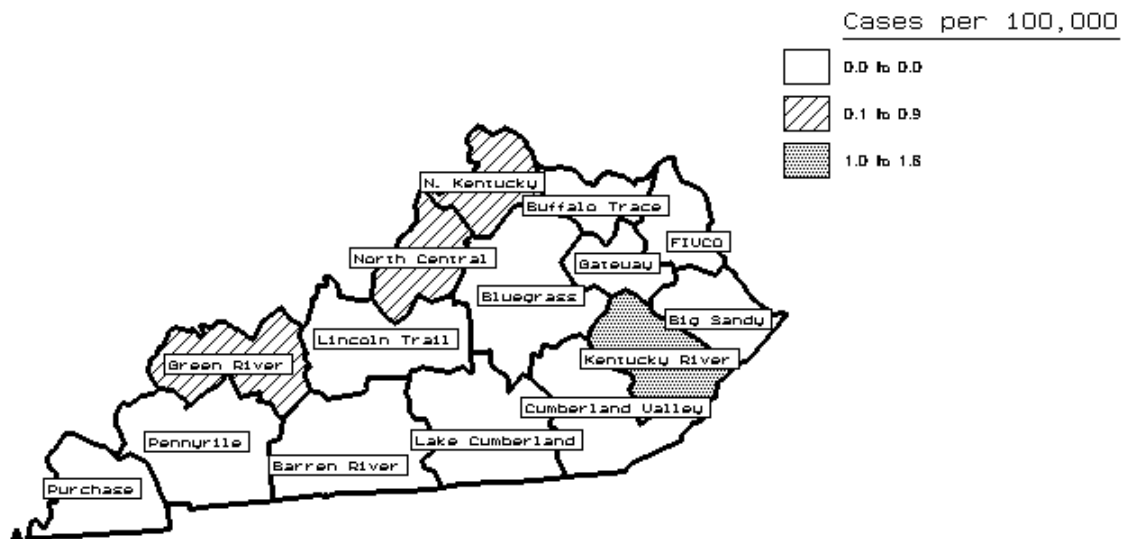
Epidemiology

Kentucky 2002	Rate per 100,000	U. S. Rate (2001) per 100,000
Cases 5	0.1	1.41

Cases by Gender

Female	2	0.1
Male	3	0.2

Acute Hepatitis C by District, Kentucky Annual Incidence, 2002



Kentucky River District had the highest rate at 1.7 cases per 100,000 followed by Green River District with a rate of 0.5 cases per 100,000. Cases were reported from 5 different counties and all cases were between 30 and 45 years in age.